Kilobyte

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Editor's corner

OK, if there is anything more difficult then writing the editorial for completely new and (yet) unknown magazine about 8-bit computers, please let me know about it. But anyway, I'll try to write something that will make sense, although I'm not quite sure I'll succeed.

So, here we go. You are looking at the new magazine about 8-bit computers (wait, didn't I said that already?). And why 8-bit old trash, I hear you say? Well, believe me or not, but there ARE people interested in these little machines and maybe, just maybe, they will also be interested in reading the stuff we write about them. There is mostly Spectrum and Commodore 64 stuff in this first issue, but we hope to hear from some Amstrad CPC and other 8-bit computer fans, and maybe they can even contribute to the magazine by writing an article or two about their machine. Anyway2... you'll find interviews, technical articles and even game reviews(what would be a magazine about computers without reviews?). Wanna learn to program "the old way"? No problem, you got Qazi's article about programming simple text adventures on C64... Wanna learn a few tricks about programming Spectrum in assembly language? No problem! Just read the series of articles about that! And starting with the next issue, you'll be able to see which 8-bit games are the most popular at the moment in TOP GAMES section.

And one more thing: Although this is free magazine(no strings attached), we still ask you to email us your opinions, wishes and maybe articles. We cannot improve without your help!

Oh, I almost forgot! I just need to thank QAZI here! He's a great guy that worked his bu** off to deliver you quality C64 game reviews! And they really are worth reading, trust me!

You can visit KiloByte web site at WWW.KBMAGAZINE.NET, where you'll find info about future releases and our contact addresses.
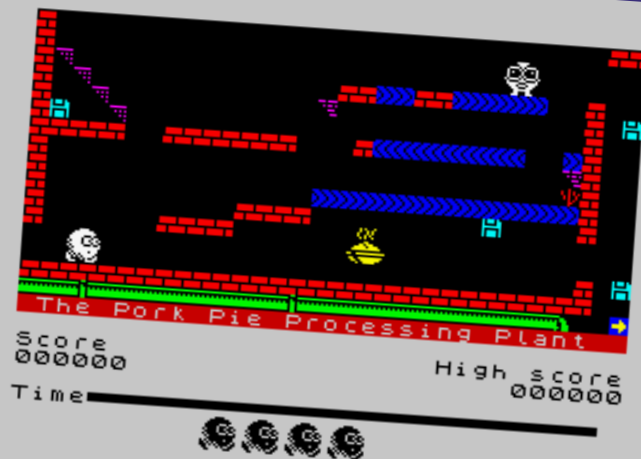
Here, hope that'll do. If not, then I'll try harder next time! 'Till then!

bJohnnyBravo

Cronosoft should soon release new game for ZX Spectrum called **Plan 7 Channel 9.** It's a platform game with a silly story based loosely on the IMAGINE SOFTWARE story... It's 1984, and Eugene Evans has stolen the best ULTIMATE GAMES due for release that Christmas, and he's taken them to the moon. You have to find all of the missing tapes and bring them back to Earth, so all the kids don't have to spend Christmas playing 'WACKY WAITERS'. Check the screenshot on the left! Looks great...


The Pork Pie Processing Plant
SCORE 000000   High score 000000
Time

SCORE: 002206   LEVEL: 01   9678 4: 07

balloonacy

Cronosoft, the company behind a few very good new Spectrum games, released a new Commodore 64 title. Can you escape the deadly caverns through the windows of freedom? Barring your escape is an electrified window. You must hit the master switch hidden in each cavern to stop yourself being frazzled. Not as easy as it sounds though, as various nasties and evil creatures patrol the cavern, not to mention the laser beams...

Weenies

Cronosoft released a game called Weenies for BBC and Electron computers. Game should take over the world by storm... at least that's what Simon Ullyatt from Cronosoft stated on the web page... Must say that screenshots looks yummie...
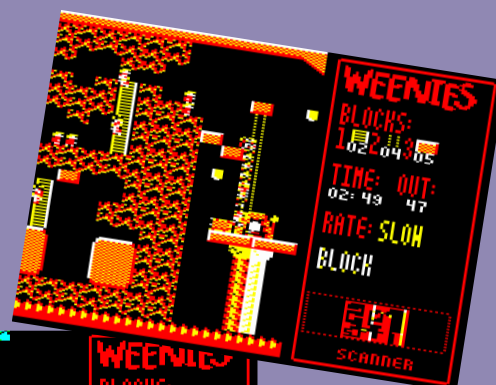
News in brief

RamSoft's web page was updated on 11. november. There is an update for RealSpectrum emulator available... so, if RealSpectrum is the emulator of your choice and you want to upgrade it, surf to **www.ramsoft.bbk.org/realspec.html**!

There was a triple new release from Cronosoft on 9th of december. The games are : **Football Glory**(football management game), **Weenies**(check previous page for screenies) and **zblast SD+** from Russel Marks. Head over to **www.cronosoft.co.uk** if you want to find out more about the games.

If you want to check out the Speccy clone project, then go to **aticatac.altervista.org**. You will find info and quite a few interesting photos. Very interesting indeed!

Do you like reading the reviews of Spectrum games? If so, then surf over to **www.geocities.com/kyle_coare** where you'll find quite a few of them! There is even one review of Golden Axe for MegaDrive. So, what are you waiting for?

You can go to **spectrum128.spb.ru/paper/ to** check out interesting web-paper called My Speccy. The paper is published by DJ I-Kick and is in Russian. But don't worry, as you can go to **www.translate.ru**, page that will help you translate the site from Russian to English language (just click on "translate WWW" and follow the instructions). You will find software reviews, demo scene, links and much more info about everything Speccy related. Worth checking out!

Spectaculator 6.0 is released! This version is packed with features like integrated debugger/monitor, enchanced TZX renderer, emulation of the Russian Pentagon 128 and Scorpion ZS 256 machines, export of raw machine code and much more! Only sad news is that the Spectaculator is now being distributed as Shareware. You can get 30 day trial version from **www.spectaculator.com** web site. It will cost you **26.99$** for full version registration.

An interview with Steve Rowlands! Steve was involved in some of the best C64 games ever! These include Creatures, Creatures 2: Torture Trouble, Mayhem in Monsterland... read the interview here: **www.lemon64.com/interviews/steve_rowlands.php**!

You know of anything that should be published here?
Send the news to info@kbmagazine.net

Jon Ritman

Does he need an introduction? Do I really need to tell you that this is the guy behind some of the best selling games for 8-bit computers? Match Day, Head over Heels, BatMan... sounds familiar? If not, then let me just tell you that these are some of the best games made in the 80s. And the man behind the craiton of them kindly agreed to a small interview with us.

Let me first thank you for taking your time for this interview. So for starters... how did you get started on computers?

I was a TV engineer in 1981 and the company I worked for were thinking of renting out Atari computers so thinking they would need engineers I thought I'd buy a Sinclair ZX81 to get used to them - my first game was published a few months later.

**What was your first program or game?**

Namtir Raiders on the ZX81.

What games and programs have you had published on 8-bit computers?

Look at my web page, there is a complete list at www.ritman.co.uk

*(The list is : **Namtir Raiders** - Artic, **Cosmic Debris** - Artic, **3D Combat Zone** - Artic, **Dimension Destructors** - Artic, **Bear Bovver** - Artic, **Match Day** - Ocean, **Batman** - Ocean, **Head over Heels** - Ocean, **Match Day 2** - Ocean, **Monster Max** - Rare/Titus).*

What do you think of your games? Which is your personal favourite?

The soccer games show their age simply because they are so slow but Head over-Heels and Batman still look pretty good as does Monster max.
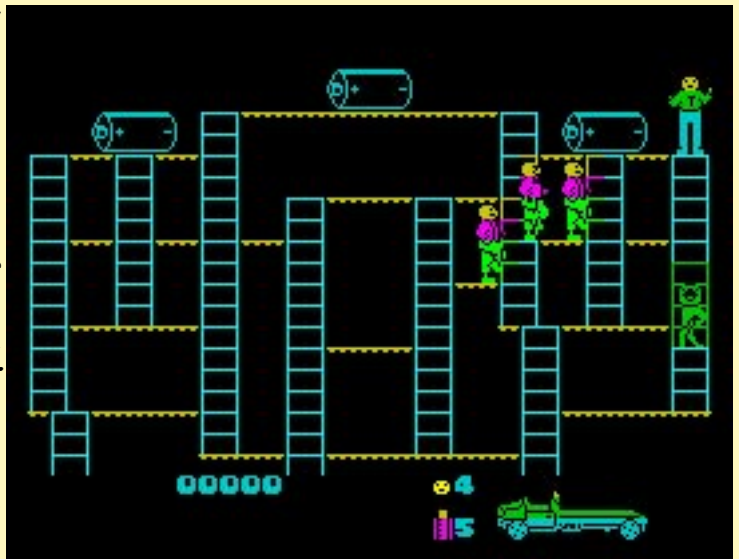
Bear Bovver

Do you still play games on any of the 8-bit computers or emulators? If so, which ones?

Not really.

How and when did you leave the 8-bit scene? What was the last 8-bit computer you programmed for?

The Game Boy (Monster Max) was the last 8 bit machine I published a game on although I did produce a development system for most 8 bit machines - almost all Rare games published in this period were developed on it.

Match Day 1

What do you remember the most about working on 8-bits? Any anectodes?

Slow and dirty is what I mainly remember, I even found a fault in an Hitachi processor that Rare used in an arcade board - course Hitachi claimed it was a feature although I'm unsure how much use it is for a CPU to randomly stop processing instructions in the correct order.

Who was your favourite programmer of the 80s?

Chris Stamper of Rare.

What do you think about the games for PC? Are they really that good?

Sometimes they are good and sometimes they aren't - the only problem with the larger machines compared with the smaller 8 bit machines is that

it take a larger team to develop for them and larger teams equal larger costs and therefore less chances taken - the 8 bit programmers could afford to take wild chances and some turned out as major leaps forward.

Was the myth about rich programmers true? Were they really paid that much in those days?

It was possible to make quite a lot of money if you published your own games and even quite a lot publishing through a publisher but only if the games did very well. I know porgrammers who thought 10000 sales were pretty good at a time when I expected to get 40000+.

Are you surprised about the fact that so many people are still enjoying old games and even making new ones for 8-bit computers?

Yes.

Can you tell us what were you doing after the 8-bit era and what are you doing now?

After the development kit and a period working with Domark I formed my own development company called Cranberry Source that was, a few years later, merged into Argonaut. After I left Argonaut I worked for a few years with Geoff Crammond on his Grand Prix series and right now I'm taking a rest (if you can call major renovation of a house taking it easy).

Thanks a lot Jon, for taking a time to answer these questions.

Head over Heels

Some of the other titles by Mr. Ritman :

Batman

3D Combat Zone

Match Day 2

Dimension Destructors

How To Write C64 Text Adventures In BASIC

Introduction

BASIC is brilliant. In the hands of a newbie it can be quick and easy to get effective results, whilst a more experienced user of BASIC can bring together past knowledge to construct better programs. At least, this is the way that I was able to start writing text adventures- start off small, and then use the techniques you learn to build bigger and better programs. This tutorial won't teach you how to construct Qazisoft's artificial intelligence-based games, but you may be able to gain some kind of understanding of how they work after reading this tutorial. However, that isn't the point. The point of this tutorial is to turn the Kilobyte readership into C64 developers quickly and easily. Who knows: you might even have fun along the way...

Line numbers and the PRINT command

All programs that you will be writing have line numbers in them. They are an important reference point for the developer (you) and the machine (C64), as you can refer to certain commands that are placed at certain lines using the GOTO command, which we will cover later. Line numbers can start at one and increase in increments of 1 (1, 2, 3), or they can start at 10 and increase in incements of 10 (10, 20)- useful for if you need to enter an extra line in between 10 and 20, for example. The main rule is that they always increase and never go 10, 20, 30, 27. That would be silly.

The PRINT command is the first command we will use for this example. Boot up your C64. hold SHIFT and press CLR/HOME to clear the screen (which you should already know), and type NEW. Press RETURN, and the C64 will recognise that you wish to write a new program by displaying READY and a flashing cursor. Type in the following:

```
10 PRINT "MY FIRST PROGRAM"
```

Press RETURN after typing the closing speech mark, then type RUN and press RETURN. The following should be displayed on the screen:

```
MY FIRST PROGRAM
READY.
```

The "READY" message and flashing cursor indicate the program is finished and you can return to coding. If you type LIST now, you will see your program:

```
10 PRINT "MY FIRST PROGRAM"
```

The "READY" message shows once again. Type NEW and hit RETURN to start a new program and type the following, hitting RETURN after line 10 has been typed:

```
10 PRINT "MY FIRST PROGRAM"
20 PRINT "IS RATHER GOOD"
```

Press RETURN after the closing speech mark on line 20, type RUN, press RETURN and you will see your new program:

```
MY FIRST PROGRAM
IS RATHER GOOD
```

The GOTO and END commands

The GOTO command is used to make the program execute a command at a certain line number, as I touched upon in the start of part 2. Start a new program by typing NEW and pressing RETURN and type the following:

```
10 PRINT "THIS PROGRAM WILL"
20 GOTO 40
30 PRINT "NOT"
40 PRINT "SKIP LINE 30!"
50 END
```

After putting the closing speech mark on line 40, press the RETURN key, run your program (type RUN and press RETURN), and this is displayed:

```
THIS PROGRAM WILL
SKIP LINE 30!
```

By putting a GOTO command at line 20 we have told the C64 to skip the PRINT command at line 30- so NOT is not shown- and go straight to line 40 to display SKIP LINE 30! Easy, eh? Try a few more by yourself to see what you can come up with.

END stops the program- it's pretty useless here, and so line 50 isn't really necessary, but if you want to prematurely stop the program after PRINTing GAME OVER, you need to put an END command.

GOTO commands are the way I create paths through my text adventures; I tell the program to go to a line where GAME OVER is PRINTed if the user has messed up. IF the user has messed up...?

Strings and the IF function

Believe it or not, the first three lessons demonstrate only the very basics of what is possible with BASIC (no pun intended.) PRINT and GOTO are usually the first commands people learn, and then they do something stupid like:

```
10 PRINT"SO FUNNY"
20 GOTO 10
```

(Press RUN/STOP to stop the program)

The wannabe text adventure creator, however, will want to know how to navigate the player around the paths they create (with their GOTOs.) This is where strings and the IF function come in.

If I remember correctly, a string is a variable waiting to have a user input something into it. In my text adventures, this variable will be A or B, as I have PRINTed options on the screen:

```
10 PRINT"A: EAT"
20 PRINT"B: DO NOT EAT"
```

After PRINTing options such as those above, we need to use the INPUT command. It is similar to the PRINT command in that it prints text on the screen, but different from the PRINT command in that it waits for user input before continuing. The user input is stored in what is known as a string, symbolised by a dollar symbol ($). String A, for example, is A$.

Type NEW, hit RETURN, and try typing the following program. I will explain each part afterwards:

```
10 PRINT"A: EAT"
20 PRINT"B: DO NOT EAT!"
30 INPUT"<A/B>";A$:IF A$="A" GOTO 50
40 IF A$="B" GOTO 70
50 PRINT"YOU EAT FOOD."
60 END
70 PRINT"YOU STARVE."
80 END
```

We start by PRINTing the options the user has on screen, as shown in lines 10 and 20. The INPUT command on line 30 tells the C64 that this is no ordinary PRINT command, and so it should wait for user input. "<A/B>?" is shown on screen, and the flashing cursor signifies that the C64 has recognised the INPUT function and is waiting for a value to be put into string A. It knows to put the value in string A because of the A$ on line 30. We then use the IF command to tell the C64 that if the user inputs A into string A (by pressing A and then pressing RETURN), it should execute the command shown at line 50 (IF A$="A" GOTO 50), which is to print "YOU EAT FOOD" on the screen. As explained in lesson 3, END prematurely stops the program at line 60 so that it doesn't go on to line 70 and print "YOU STARVE" on the screen. Line 40 tells the C64 that if the user inputs B into string A (by pressing B and then pressing RETURN), it should execute the command at line 70 (IF A$="B" GOTO 70), which is to print "YOU STARVE" on the screen. And again, END stops the program, but is not really needed at line 80.

A sample program

```
10 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A TOWN"
20 PRINT"THERE IS A MAN WITH A KEY TO AN
ANCIENT TREASURE TROVE."
```

```
30 PRINT"A: ROB THE MAN"
40 PRINT"B: TALK TO THE MAN"
50 INPUT"<A/B>";A$:IF A$="A" GOTO 70
60 IF A$="B" GOTO 110
70 PRINT"YOU ROB THE MAN..."
80 PRINT"...BUT HE CALLS THE POLICE!"
90 PRINT"GAME OVER."
100 END
110 PRINT"HE OFFERS YOU A PRICE FOR THE
KEY."
120 PRINT"A: ACCEPT"
130 PRINT"B: DECLINE"
140 INPUT"A OR B";B$:IF B$="A" GOTO 180
150 IF B$="B" GOTO 160
160 PRINT"YOU ARE LEFT NO BETTER OR NO WORSE
OFF."
170 GOTO 90
180 PRINT"YOU UNLOCK THE RICHES AND RETIRE
HAPPILY."
190 PRINT"WELL DONE."
200 END
```

Note how line 170 reuses lines 90-100. Because 100 stops the program, there is no need to repeat the instructions shown at lines 90-100 later on; just reuse them. Also notice how we have a second string, String B (B$.) Does this mean you are limited to 26 strings? I think so- my programs never use more than 26, so I don't know. However, if you are only looking to create short games, then all the information you need is right here.

Conclusion

It takes a lot of practice to gain the knowledge needed to create first class adventure game on Commodore 64, but it's not impossible. So if you are interested in programming adventures, fire up the little 'ol "breadbox"(or emulator) and start coding. Who knows, maybe on your fifth or sixth try, you'll create a game that will look something like this:

Qazi

Programming Spectrum in assembly

If you are interested in ZX Spectrum programming, then you probably know that built-in Basic can be quite useful, but at times, sadly, also quite slow programming language. I believe you're also familiar with headaches, appearing every time you try to code fast graphics or smooth scroll in it. But fear not, as I will show you how to do that, and more, in a language much closer to the heart(CPU) of your black box, the assembler.

In this series of articles we'll take a look at how computer, ZX Spectrum in our case, is storing and processing the data. We will learn about a few different number systems in use while programming in assembler, then take a quick look at the heart of our Speccy, the Z80A processor and then, we'll slowly start to walk the path towards the knowledge that will allow us to issue direct commands to our computer in a language that doesn't need no interpreters for the machine to understand.

The memory of ZX Spectrum 48k

The memory in ZX Spectrum 48k is divided into two different sectors. First 16 kilobytes is called ROM (Read Only Memory). You can only read values from this part of the memory. The second part is called RAM (Random Access Memory) and you can either write or read the values from this part. From this 48 kb of RAM, you get around 40 kb available for your program.

How the computer "sees" the data

Before we can start to program in assembly, we must first know a thing or two about how the computer sees the data. Because computer cannot understand the word *"PRINT"* or something like that. All the computer sees are zeroes and ones (something like 10011101). Each one or zero is called a **bit** and eight bits together are called a **byte** and 1024 bytes are called the **kilobyte**. ZX Spectrum 48k RAM can hold 48 kilobytes, which is exactly 49152 bytes of information.

In the computer, everything is stored as bytes and each "place" or box in which a byte can be stored has an address. You can store one byte in each such "box" inside the computer, so basically, you can store a number in the range of 0-255 inside one box. And what number systems do we use to do that?

Binary

Binary numbers are composed of 2 possible digits (1 and 0). Each digit of a number has a power of 2 associated with it based on it position in the number. For example :

$$10010110 = 1 \times 2^7 + 0 \times 2^6 + 0 \times 2^5 + 1 \times 2^4 + 0 \times 2^3 + 1 \times 2^2 + 1 \times 2^1 + 0 \times 2^0 = 150$$

Hexadecimal (or hex for short)

Hexadecimal numbers are composed of 16 possible digits (0-9 and the letter A-F; A being 10, B being 11 and so on...). Each digit of a number has a power of 16 associated with it based on it position in the number. For example :

$$5B2_{16} = 5 \times 16^2 + 11 \times 16^1 + 2 \times 16^0 = 1280 + 176 + 2 = 1458$$

Octal

Octal number system uses base 8 and includes the digits 0-7. Each digit has a power of 8 associated with it, again, based on its position in the number. Example:

$$241_8 = 2 \times 8^2 + 4 \times 8^1 + 1 \times 8^0 = 128 + 32 + 1 = 161$$

These are the number systems you should now about when dealing with programming in assembly. I represented only the basics about them as we will cover them in more details later.

Machine Code

As I already mentioned, the only thing the computer can manipulate are numbers. These are stored in computer's memory and manipulated by the Central Processing Unit(the CPU). Each of the numbers manipulated by a processor can represent a piece of data or an instruction. And what is an instruction? Well, maybe I can use Basic for example. As *"PRINT"* means something to Basic interpreter, so does 125 mean something to the processor. For example, a number 3 instructs the processor to increment the value in register B(we will talk about registers next, but you can imagine the register to be something like a variable in Basic). So the machine code is basicaly a series of numbers read and manipulated by the CPU. So, if this is Machine Code, then what is Assembler then? Well, it would be akward to program the computer

directly in machine code so we can use Assembly instead. Assembly is nothing more than a simple set of commands(or mnemonics) representing CPU instructions. If we want to increment the value in B register(as in previous example), we can use the command *INC B* in assembly, which is far easier to remember then a number 3. We can the use the assembler to compile(or convert) the mnemonics we wrote into real machine code. I'll show you how to do that in the next issue. But first, let us take a closer look at the CPU that will execute our commands.

Zilog Z80A processor

The processor used in ZX Spectrum 48k is Z80A made by the Zilog company. It runs at 3,5 Mhz and it is, so called, fourth generation microprocessor. Z80A has two sets of six general purpose registers which can be used individually as 8-bit registers, or as 16-bit register pair. And what are these registers? Well, as I mentioned above, you can imagine them to be something like a basic variable. It can hold a number in the range of 0-255(as individual 8-bit register), or 0-65535(as 16-bit register pair). These general purpose registers are two sets of Accumulator(*A*) and Flags(*F*) registers, and two sets of general purpose registers *B,C,D,E,H* and *L* 8-bit registers. If you need to use 16-bit values, you can use *BC*, *DE* or *HL* register pairs (*B*, *D* and *E* being the "high" byte). The CPU also contains a few special purpose registers. These are *I, R, IX, IY, SP* and *PC* registers, but we'll deal with these later.

You mentioned something like High byte??

Yes, before we conclude our first lesson, I should probably explain what the high byte means. 16-bit numbers are composed of 2 bytes together, one being the "high" and the other being the "low" byte. It is probably best if I explain this by using the example. Let say that *BC* register pair contains the 4200 16-bit value. In this case the number is represented in binary like this : 00010000 01101000. First eight bits being the "high" byte here, so let us review how we can convert this back to decimal:

$$00010000\ 01101000 = 0 \times 2^{15} + 0 \times 2^{14} + 0 \times 2^{13} + 1 \times 2^{12} + 0 \times 2^{11} + 0 \times 2^{10} + 0 \times 2^9 + 0 \times 2^8 +$$
$$0 \times 2^7 + 1 \times 2^6 + 1 \times 2^5 + 0 \times 2^4 + 1 \times 2^3 + 0 \times 2^2 + 0 \times 2^1 + 0 \times 2^0 = 4200$$

And in this example the *B* register would hold 00010000 and the *C* register would hold 01101000. Simple, but quite hard to explain. Anyway, hope you get the picture.

Conclusion

OK, I tried to briefly explain a few things you'll need to know in future lessons. I tried to make no assumptions about your knowledge, so I hope I didn't over explained the basics. Will try to refrain from doing this in the future.

So, where will we go next? In the next issue, we'll start with actual programming. We will learn a few basic instructions, their usage and how to test the programs in emulator.

Until then, here is a short quiz for you :

1) What is the A register called?
2) What is the F register called?
3) $75D_{16}$ = ?
4) 42_8 = ?
5) 11011010 = ?
6) Name the special purpose registers in Z80A
7) Which is the "high" byte register in HL register pair?
8) 0100101001101010 = ?

Answers

8) 19050
7) H
6) I, R, IX, IY, SP and PC
5) 218
4) 34
3) 1885
2) Flags
1) Accumulator

Reviews

Welcome to the reviews section of Kilobyte, where you will find...how can I put this...thought-provoking opinion on some of the defining Commodore 64 and ZX Spectrum games that our reviewers thought deserved inclusion in this magazine of sorts. Of course "our reviewers" includes me, Qazi, and while I have done some reviewing in the past (some for esteemed Commodore 64 website Lemon, and some for some of my personal web sites that never quite lived long enough to get interesting), nothing I had done before can compare to what I am doing at the moment.

I believe that an extremely long task list proved to be one of the main causes of the downfall of my personal web sites: I simply couldn't manage doing the text and screenshots for the review, THEN doing all of the presentation necessary for the review to look pretty, and then uploading it before moving onto the next review. (Having said that, part of the blame for the site's downfall lies at my feet, due to the fact that I had very little experience of producing good HTML which displayed text and pictures in a nice neat table; most of the time my efforts seemed to be disastrous: text being where the pictures should be, or tables that are two columns by three rows instead of the other way round. You know, silly things like that.

Lemon seemed child's play by comparison; simply mail your review in plain text format and let the HTML gurus do all of the hard work that was necessary to make it look all presentable and pretty (although I'm not sure if they bothered to check my awful spelling - thankfully my proofreading has improved since the bad old days). Doing all the HTML for your own regularly updated site can be a nightmare if it has all kinds of tables and frames and picture files with file extensions that are in the wrong case and...you get the picture. Anyway, after the disastrous attempt at my own reviews site, I never wanted to go back to reviews. Or so I thought...

Just over two weeks after my last review for Lemon 64 (it was a review of Iridis Alpha if you're interested), there was a veritable recruitment advertisement on the forum of the aforementioned giant of C64 web sites. The author of the topic was looking for writers for "a new e-zine about 8-bit computers." It sounded appealing, as I always felt that I enjoyed expressing my opinions about the Commodore games that I loved and loathed. However, even though I really wanted to contribute to this 'zine, I was at the time extremely busy working on my own web site (this still happens today: I now do stuff for three websites, one of which being my own).

The next day, I had found a gap in production of my web site where I believed that I was able to devote time to the e-zine that would become the web site that you downloaded this e-zine from. The day after that, the editor answered any questions I had, and the day after that, I wrote my first piece for the e-zine. The rest is history: fast forward about three months later, and I have written roughly fifty pieces for Kilobyte. Sadly, I later found out from the editor that none of the other people who promised to deliver content actually delievered any, so it was pretty much up to me and him to work on the thing: whilst I did reviews, more reviews, and the occasional introduction to reviews, he provided essential maintenance and put in a lot of hard work so as to hold the reviews together, make the whole thing look pretty, and also add other features and reviews and stuff.

Let's face it, without the hard work of the Kb editor, the site would consist of a load of zipped up text files and GIFs. Hardly the best way to present a magazine now is it? No. And whilst the team have tasks to do that don't involve the magazine, we promise that we will try and deliver the best content we can produce. And for me, that means producing a completely honest and unbiased opinion. As I continually stress to people who think I'm a bit hard on games, if I think a game's completely worthless, then I won't hold back; similarly, I want our readership to know about the brilliance present within every superb game I review. And whilst some of the high-scoring games will be liked more by fans of the genre, I hope that everyone will like the games in one way or another.

So that's it for this intro. I hope you enjoy what we have to offer. And if you don't, you know where the contact details are. Then again, if you do enjoy Kilobyte, please let us know; at least then we'll know that we're doing something right!

Qazi

TURBO OUTRUN

If you ask me, I think that the racing game has got to be one of the hardest to develop due to the need for fast screen updating. I may be completely wrong, of course, but my opinion is mainly due to the fact that I have seen the likes of Hard Drivin' and Cisco Heat. These games have scenery that, instead of moving gracefully past you as you travel at 200kp/h, jerks towards you as if 90% of the frames in between are missing. Other genres do not rely on such dramatic screen updating- mainly because they do not demand that the player move at very high speeds, and also it might have something to do with the fact that racers have the players moving "into-the screen as opposed" to from side to side, and so this might make it harder to update the visual information.

I am saying all of this because Turbo Outrun has some of the fastest-moving action, with nice scenery that flies past at a respectable rate, unlike the aforementioned Cisco Heat etc. The only real comparable game is Chase H.Q. II: Special Criminal Investigation, but while this game has blasting elements, Turbo Outrun is fully focused on chasing checkpoints at high speeds whilst admiring the beautiful scenery.

Indeed, that last point is one of the characteristics of the Outrun series. Outrun is about blue skies, or warm sunsets, with you, your lady, and your Ferrari Testarossa. Whilst there are some stages where it is cloudy or raining, there are also some great views as you race along, and few have come close to recreating the graphical splendour of Turbo Outrun or, indeed, any of the Outrun series.

So, checkpoints then? Yes. There are no opponent cars for you to overtake, and there are no police who will try to stop you for speeding (unlike in the sequel, Outrun Europa). The only things stopping you from reaching the checkpoints are the things that come naturally. In other words, bad weather and lots of traffic. Turbo Outrun is a racing game in a nicely simplified format, and this is refreshing when you consider gimmicks that have come and gone (police, weapons, lots of opponents, oil slicks). The only vaguely complex thing you will have to master is the boost button- other than that this is a game built for people who relish racers that simply demand pure driving skill.

Turbo Outrun- like Outrun, but with a Turbo? Well, you have this boost button, and it is quite clever. This is because, unlike Chase HQ, where you simply get 5 boosts and nothing more, Turbo Outrun lets you use infinite boosts, but only if you are patient. Using a boost overheats your car a bit, and if it is too overheated you cannot boost until your car has cooled down a bit. It allows for a bit of strategy as you learn to use the boost where it will be at it's most effective- in other words, when you are not likely to crash. The boost shamelessly flaunts Turbo Outrun's unbelievable rate of on-screen scenery updating, and it is a real thrill to have billboards and other things zipping past you at 200kp/h. All this action and beauty wouldn't be complete without some quality tunes, and even here the game doesn't disappoint. While the last two tunes are open to opinion, all tunes are of a high quality, and the first two are very good. There are also little boosting and screeching and crashing sound effects, although it's a shame you can't hear your engine.

Another good point about the game is the scorekeeping. Eh? Well, Turbo Outrun increases your score constantly- it adds to it each centimetre further you travel (probably.) This accuracy means you can have some really good high score challenges- both trying to beat your own score, and trying to beat those of anyone else playing. This really makes it addictive, and with luscious graphics, great music, and stunning gameplay, it's hard to find fault with such a game (apart from some of those tunes.) Sorry...

Qazi

92%

70%

91%

92%

86%

Sir Fred

I should point out right at the beginning, that this is not the game for people without a patience, as it will take you quite a while to get used to the game controls and movements of the main character. But if you take your time, learn a trick or two and look away when you take a plunge from balcony for the tenth consecutive time, then my friend, you are in for some great adventuring time! And what about the story? Well, it goes like this :

Once upon a time there was a wise old king who ruled over a happy land. Everyone lived happily ever after, except wicked Baron Hugh D'Unwyt and the king's daughter, whom he's kidnapped. As all the other knights are away questing, it falls to the aged and corpulent Sir Fred to rescue her.

As in every other arcade adventure, you have to collect various objects and use them at the right locations. You will have to solve quite a few problems before you will successfuly penetrate the defences of the castle Feare, the Baron's stronghold! Objects can be found in different locations each time you play, but this only adds to replayability in my humble opinion(I read that there should be 56 permutations of the where the different items essential to your quest will appear). Objects are displayed in bottom part of the screen and the currently selected object is highlighted in red. To use this object, simply press the Use key. Some objects have limited number of uses(like 9 stones that you can throw at the enemy) and some can be used only once(like a ham or a bottle of wine). If you want to get rid of the enemies, then you better find a weapon or two. You can find a sword, bow and stones lying on the floor, and I think that any further explanation of their purpose is not really needed. Watch out, as poor Fred has only one life and very limited amount of energy! You lose energy each time you fall from various ledges(platforms), or get hit by an enemy or even (yeap, I'm not kidding) if you run (and consequentialy fall) over the stairs!

Graphics are quite good and colourful with very little attribute clash problems. Controls will take some time to get use to, but are not so bad (as long as you don't have two left or right hands). Animation of the main character is great with a lot of details. And sound? Its appropriate to say, that it is of the Spectrum quality... a beep there and boop there... you get the idea. Music is nonexistent (at least in 48k version).

What more is there to be said? Nothing much actually... If you like arcade adventures, then this is the game for you, if not... then you better check out some other Speccy titles...

6JohnnyBravo

🖌️	**83%**
🎵	**70%**
🎙️	**78%**
⏱️	**90%**

How to start? (Warning! Spoilers below!)

(these are hints for object placement at the first try after you load the game)

* Take the ham and throw it in the moat. It will deceive the piranha so you will swim safely towards the creeper!
* Climb the creeper to the balcony, jump on the cloud (watch out for the lightning) and move the lever. The castle wall will open!
* There should be a bottle of wine around. Find it and take it!
* Go back into the moat and swim under the water through the openning in the castle wall.
* Get the sword! (you can kill the octopus with one of the stones you picked up earlier)
* Give the bottle to the guy on some kind of a raft in exchange for a crossing of the river(pond??)
* Use your trusty sword to kill the knight. (The easiest thing to do is to just press right, up, right, ... key combination, when using the sword).
* The way into the castle is now opened...
* If you are constantly dying, try using
```
POKE 46862,201 or POKE 46650,167
```

80%

ESWAT

Hmm. ESWAT seemed to look like one of those fun action packed shooters that I really seem to like (as in Midnight Resistance and NARC) when I got a look at the advertisement in some magazine all those years back. It seemed like the kind of game that would offer the same kind of gameplay, the same thrilling action, the same sort of excellent music. You know the sort...believe it or not, among the dozens of rubbish platformy-shooty type games and film tie-ins that usually ended up becoming rubbish platformy-shooty type games, there would be some kind of game that would, y'know, EXCITE the player a little, and not just bore him or her to tears as he or she wandered along with the fire button glued down and the hand firmly holding the joystick to the right (okay, slight exaggeration.) Despite all this, when I finally got to play the damn thing it turned out to be a bit of an anticlimax. In fact I felt kind of embarrased that I had wondered for so long about how good this game would be (if you haven't already guessed, I never got a chance to buy the game back in the day when Commodore 64 games were still available to buy)...I had looked at the enticing advert that promised guns and glory and excitement and all the stuff that MR and NARC deliver plenty of. And today I had a look at the game to see what it was like to actually play.

Ever heard of a game called Cops? Probably not, at a guess. Cops was another one of those games that looked like it was knocked out by someone with a copy of the Shoot 'em up Construction Kit (or SEUCK). You and/or a second player stroll along merrily and blast everything in your path until the screen stopped scrolling, at which point, once you'd eliminated the enemy threat, the scenery would change completely and the screen would be able to scroll again.

ESWAT is just like this; you are merrily fighting away and blasting stuff, and the screen stops moving. This is the game's way of showing you that it is the end of this current scene. Then the screen goes black, there is a crackly sound, and it's on to the next scene. And so after a few more scenes you will get to some kind of boss who you shoot a few times (normally whilst ducking; I found that the enemies aren't usually intelligent enough to aim.) Then it loads the next level and the cycle repeats.

Also, there is a distinctive lack of sound effects, which makes the game seem even more amateurish. All that you have is a "thud" sound effect for when someone gets a bullet in them, a "bang" sound effect, and not much else. And I'm not sure about some of the enemy sprites either; there are some who look like girls on skateboards or something, and I got the impression that they were innocents and that I should avoid shooting them. Then it turns out that they are attacking me, and so I had no choice BUT to shoot them. I suppose in a way it could be a nice innovation that the game does not dress up all of it's enemies so that they look like enemies, but it was still rather confusing.

So it seems that ESWAT seems to be lacking that little "something" that might make it stand out among the millions of side-scrolling platform blaster thingies. Okay,, so there is a simultaneous two-player mode, which is never a bad thing (unless it's a REALLY awful game, in which case you're probably only using the game for torture purposes by demanding that your victim join you in a game), but the game is still very dull to play, and completely underpolished. It's quite a wonder how they actually managed to publish this thing, given the fact that it is so comparable to SEUCKers such as Cops. Hell, even Cops had nicer, crisper looking sprites, and it's one-hit-and-you're-dead nature makes gameplay more tense than ESWAT. So, I'd really give this game a miss. It's good for a minute or two, but then you realise that this has been done before, and better.

Qazi

🖌️	**61%**
🎵	**14%**
🕹️	**41%**
⏱️	**23%**

35%

PUD PUD IN WEIRD WORLD

If you are currently on the lookout for a weird, wacky maybe even twisted platform game with one of the weirdest characters around, then look no more! You just found one of the best representatives of the "genre". No, really! This is one of those games that makes you think what went through the authors brain while he was designing the thing(no disrespect to Joffa Smiff intended).

In Pud Pud, you are in command of this strange thing with flapping ears that help him fly(I actually heard somewhere that this thing is supposed to be a flying pudding or something, go figure!). His objective is to eat 10 hidden puddings and escape from the Weird World. To acomplish that, you are given three lives at the beginning of the game, but the game could certainly do with more of those to spare, as you better believe me when I tell you that the game is not one of the easiest I played on the Speccy.

You have to travel through a lot of rooms in search for puddings, and some of them contain some really strange ornaments, like cans of 7 urps, skeleton heads with flowers growing on top of them and similar wacky stuff. Immediatly upon entering a room, various creatures are starting to emerge from strange looking, hmm... doohickies, and some of them, when eaten, will replenish your energy and others will slowly kill you.

So, should I recommend this one or not? Well, the game is somehow, well, different. Graphic is colorful and detailed, but could be better. Sound has to qualify for very good and there is a lot to be heard in this game. But is this one addictive? I won't answer that. If you like platformers, give it a go. Maybe you will grow to like it... just as I did.

74%

6JohnnyBravo

🖌	**71%**
🎵	**82%**
🕹	**69%**
⏱	**74%**

Fighting Warrior

Iwill be quite brief in this review. Fighting warrior is another of those "nothing special" beat-em-up games, that just don't offer anything new to the player.

The story tells us that we are on a quest to save the princess Thaya from the hands of evil pharaoh. Locked away in remote temple, the princess is about to be buried alive as sacrifice to the gods. But we won't allow that, won't we?

You are armed with nothing more than a sword and there are only three different attacking moves you can use in your quest. You attack the enemy simply by pressing the fire and one of the three directional keys(up, left or down) simultaneously. You can also duck(by pressing the down key) and jump, and these two actions are the only defense against the flying arrows which, by the way, don't harm the enemy, but are merciless towards you! So try to dodge them at any cost, ok?

Well, as far as playing goes, the only goal is to move right, kill as many enemies as you can and dodge the flying arrows. Oh, and I forgot to tell you about the magical items! Yeap, along the way you will encounter some strange looking items on the floor, but I won't tell you precisely what they do. Just destroy them with your trusty sword and you'll see...

What to say for the end? Well, the game is not that bad, but could be a lot better! Graphics are quite solid, with big and nicely animated characters and colorful background. Sound is... well, it is, but not nearly enough of it. Fighting warrior is quite difficult and can soon make you nervous, so I can only recommend the game to hardcore beat-em-up fans.

6JohnnyBravo

62%

🖌	**77%**
🎵	**49%**
🕹	**63%**
⏱	**59%**

Lethal

Imagine, if you will, a game that plays a bit like Bounder crossed with Nebulus. "What crossed with what?" (Sigh.) Bounder was a kind of top down scrolling platform-type puzzle game where you had to navigate a bouncing ball around the level, making sure it didn't bounce into water or lava or black holes. Also there would be weird enemies and other such things that would try and hinder your progress. Bounder was difficult due to the automatic scrolling nature of the game: the player had little time to think about what he or she had to do; instead they just did it.

And hopefully by now we all know Nebulus: that torturous little creation of evil that has seen me throw joysticks around the room left right and centre: guide the frog to the top of the tower whilst memorising the traps that are there. Touch any of the enemies, or walk on to a disintegrating tile, or slip off a slidey tile, and you will fall back, putting more pressure on you to get to the top due to the timed nature of the game.

So where does Lethal fit into all of this? Well, Lethal sees the player navigating terrain that is filled with deadly walls you can't touch and lava pools and bouncing enemies. So far, so Bounder. However, Lethal puts more pressure on you to keep moving around the level due to the fact that every so often, a kind of arrow thing will fly across the screen from the right. The arrow will be parallel to your character, so unless you move out of the way you are likely to get hit (see Nebulus.) There are also little changes to existing factors of Bounder too, which I'll come to later.

I always thought that Bounder was a bit of a laid back game myself; the screen scrolled slowly enough for you to work out a strategy to get across this part of the level. However, Lethal's idea of firing arrows at you to get you to move is great, and makes the game a bit tricky when you find it hard to see a nearby available platform and you have this nasty-looking arrow heading straight for you. It really adds a sense of pressure to the game, and in my opinion this game is just that little bit better than Bounder.

The presentation of the game also has it's own distinctive style. Obviously it's side-scrolling as opposed to the vertical scrolling nature of Bounder, but as well as this the levels seem to have a bit more graphical imagination in them than the levels in it's main competitor. Instead of dull, muddy graphics like the ones seen in Bounder, you have bright colourful backgrounds with levels that are full of sharp primary colours.

Is this game a case of style over substance? Well, to suggest that would suggest that the game has no substance to it and there wasn't much gameplay- a foolish comment, as this- like Bounder- is great fun to play. Also, there is a greater sense of free movement, as you can manouver your character around quicker and easier than you can Bounder's tennis ball. This is helpful, as Lethal also seems to scroll faster, so pressure is enhanced as is the need for fast movement.

I am sorry- I didn't want this to be a half-review of Bounder as well, but the two games are the only ones that I know that have this kind of gameplay in them. Like I said before though: Lethal has the edge. It manages to establish itself as a kind of "Bounder Pro": a Bounder for those who don't need to take their time to absorb the mess they've got themselves into. Personally, I love it: it's a really good challenge with slightly prettier graphics. Despite this, some people may find the game a bit too difficult for their liking (mostly the people who play Bounder too much and are too used to the slow nature of the game). However, the people who want more Bounder, but harder and faster, will really enjoy this.

Qazi

76%
70%
80%
77%

76%
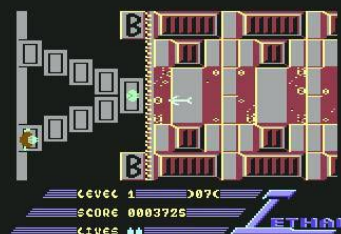
SABOTEUR

You want to see how a disguised black assasin feels on his(or her) mission? No problem! All you have to do is feed your Spectrum a cassette(or your favourite emulator a TZX file) containing a Durell classic from 1986 called Saboteur, and you will be immediatly transformed into a hired gun in a form of black ninja.

In Saboteur, you've been hired to retrieve a data disk from an enemy complex, plant a time bomb and escape with the helicopter found on the top of the complex. Sounds easy? Well, it's not! First you have a clock ticking away faster than you can imagine, add to this a bunch of skillful guards, automated laser defence systems and a lot of guard dogs, and you have... well, a mess really! But the game is solvable, you will only need some time to get acquainted with the complex. As you will see, the complex itself is split among the three sections. There is a warehouse, a sewer underground and through the sewers, you can actually reach some kind of an underground train that will take you to the computer centre, where the disk is stored. But before you take the disk, you must find the time bomb hidden somewhere in the complex! And only when you retrieved the disk and planted the bomb, can you proceed towards the top of the complex, where the escape helicopter can be found.

Saboteur can defend himself with a punch(press fire when not holding any throwable weapon), a kick(press up) and by throwing various items at the enemies. If you press down or up at the same time as fire, then you will aim your weapon up or down! Dogs can be killed by aiming any throwable weapon with down key, but is easier to run away or jump over them. If the guard throws a knife towards you, you can duck (press down) to avoid it.

The weapons that you can throw include shurikens, knives, grenades, bricks and pieces of pipe. When you stand over an item that can be picked up, the item will show in bottom right box and the item that you currently hold is shown in the bottom left box. You can only hold one object at a time!

On higher levels, you will encounter closed doors which must be opened by using the proper control panel (just press fire while standing near the panel)!

You got only limited amount of energy shown as a red bar at the bottom. You can replenish this energy by standing still (resting), but remember! Time is still ticking away! And if the time reaches zero, the game is over!

You are rewarded with higher pay(in dollars) if you kill guards. But as the programmer was(and I hope still is) an animal lover, you are gettin' none if you kill a dog. How much $$$ you've earned is written in the bottom panel. You get 0$ for killing a dog, 100$ for killing a guard with a weapon and 500$ for killing a guard with a kick or a punch. You also get large bonuses for retrieving a disk in time, swapping it with a time bomb and escape.

Skill levels affect the amount of time in which you have to complete a mission. They also affect the length of time in between the shots from the guards and laser defence systems, and they also affect the guard dogs, which become more vicious at higher levels. Skill levels also control the position of the time bomb which you will have to carry further on higher skill levels.

Graphics are very good with large sprites and colorful backgrounds. Only the not-best-ever(but still good) animations are keeping the game away from hitting the nineties in GFX. As for sound, there is very catchy tune at the beginning and the end of the game, a few sound effects now and then, nothing astonishing, but not bad for Speccy either! Game is addictive and I play it a lot. What else to say... if you like ninjas, fighting and other stuff like that, or if you just love arcade games, then you better try this one! You won't regret it!

b Johnny Bravo

🖌	**87%**
🎧	**77%**
🕹	**86%**
⏱	**89%**

85%

Another World

X-AMPLE

It's beautiful. Doubtless. The first I ever saw of Another World was probably in some PC review or feature. It looked pretty damned good then. And the last I saw of it- before playtesting it for this review- was in a PC feature of the top PC games pf all time or something like that. Now, when I saw the PC feature, I wasn't very impressed. Not at all. And it made me wonder why everyone was so impressed with it back in the day.

The Commodore 64 version, however, is beautiful. Honestly. The PC version looks crap compared to other PC games old and new (open to debate), but after reading a positive comment about the game recently, and after seeing the screenshots, I had to have a go. I had to see what I had missed; what all the fuss and wonder was about, and what everyone raved about back in the day.

The way I am talking about the game would make you think that I thought it was an over-rated pile of crap, when in actual fact the game is really quite wonderful. It manages to portray a brilliantly alien world, with stunning architecture and beaautiful backdrops that combine to create a visual treat I haven't seen from a C64 in ages. Whilst there are not as many pixel perfect razor-sharp edges on display (in other words, you may think it is a tiny bit blocky), it certainly looks very nice indeed.

There is no in-game music; just a few explosion and bounce sound effects that sound like they have been stolen straight from one of those Shoot 'em 'Up Construction Kit games they occasionaly put on cover tapes. You know the games I'm on about, with the cycling silvery-titles, and the crappy tinkly enemy movement effects...in my opinion it would have been best either to have done the sound effects properly (Turrican II), or have NO sound effects whatsoever (Gemini Wing). This is one of the points that lets the game down.

Respawning enemies are one of modern gamers pet hates. You know the deal, you are being attacked by hoardes of evil beings and no matter how hard you try and push them back they just keep coming. Some of these games have an "enemy spawner" to aim for, which adds a nice bit of tactical thought to the mayhem...but many modern games do not. Until I played Another World, I was under the impression that respawning enemies were exclusive to modern games.

Unfortunately, I got really frustrated when nasty creatures were running at me from all angles, and no matter how many of them I blasted, they just keeped coming: more and more cannon-fodder that was good for the score, but not very good for the opinion of this reviewer. I just sat there blasting away thinking to myself: "They're never going to stop coming at me are they?...I'll have to move." And so I had to swiftly maneuver the little character out of this respawn hell that I had inadvertently gotten myself into.

It's a shame that a game with so much polish and impressive presentation on offer can fall over so badly when it comes to the issue of gameplay. As a result, you will only fire it up again if you feel like a very tough challenge (in other words, not often) or if you want to see some truly excellent presentation. Another World? Yes. A world of beauty, but- more importantly- a world of hurt.

Qazi

🖌️	**84%**
🎙️	**58%**
🕹️	**69%**
⏱️	**60%**

68%

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

Everyone knows that there are only a finite number of genres currently available to choose from. This is also true when we talk about the state of the Commodore 64 gaming scene as well as the gaming scene in general. You have your racing games, your adventure games, your platformers, your shoot 'em ups...and the few less popular genres. So the main thing to consider when developing nowadays is not "How will we create a game that won't be heartlessly slammed into a genre pigeonhole?", it will be "How can we make our racing game/platform game/whatever stand out from the huge amount of familiar crap that's already out there?"

Thus, Ghouls 'n' Ghosts is one of those games that has a fair stab at doing the platform game differently. It does this by picking a theme (spookiness) and wrapping the game around it with complete attention to detail, making sure that every aspect of the game conforms with the requirements of the theme in question. It has spooky ambience during the title screen, and it has grim reapers and evil flying crow things for enemies. It has big great wooden crosses with skulls on them, and big f**k-off guillotines.

And it's continually dark. Never a ray of sunshine falls upon the world of Ghouls 'n' Ghosts. It's as if the developers said to themselves "We need to make the most atmospheric spookiest game out there if we want this to be a faithful conversion." And although it does have a certain spookiness to it, it is all done in traditional fashion. In other words, there are no out-of-the-ordinary enemies that are lurking around in each of the levels...you just have your grim reapers and evil looking birds. Oh, and Paul Daniels. Yes. Well, it isn't officialy Paul Daniels, but one of the interesting ideas Ghouls 'n' Ghosts throws at you is the idea that you don't spend all your time happily slaying the forces of evil with ease due to your infinite supply of spears. When Paul hits you with one of his balls of magic you are temporarily turned into a rather cute little duck.

Whilst you are in this state (it only lasts for a short period of time), you are unable to throw any spears and so are vulnerable to any attacks from anything. It adds another touch of strategy to a game whose genre doesn't normally "do" strategy.

Ghouls 'n' Ghosts forces the player to swap between the "kill everything that moves and storm into the fray at every opportunity" mindset, and the "go in slowly and be prepared to turn into a duck when you break open this chest" mindset. However, the duck incarnation of your character will never fail to raise a smile, as it is quite a sight to see a small defenceless cartoon duck running away from the hordes of evil as reapers raise from the ground.

There is little thought involved in this game; it is pretty much an out-and-out arcade game, with most thought being reflex based as you throw spears around left, right and centre at any helpless baddies who happen to be around at the time. And it's not just spears either; there are other great weapons to use during the game, all of which are fun to sling around and help to make the game more enjoyable.

And I have yet to mention the soundtrack. Whilst the only spookiness in it comes from the title screen's "whistling wind", the rest of the tunes are really good and fit with the fun arcadey style of it all. My original tape of the game stopped working ages ago and for ages I could still remember the tune of the opening level. Follin knocked out some excellent tunes for this game.

Right, recommendation time. If you like your platformers tough but stylish, and want a dark, spooky style that's never been bettered, coupled with great arcade-style action, this is your game. If you get scared by the sight of skeletal reapers, and run screaming from a game that slightly hints at challenging gameplay, play this anyway...you big wuss.

Qazi

77%

🖌	**73%**
🎵	**88%**
🕹	**76%**
⏱	**70%**

NODES OF YESOD

It is rather difficult to review the game of such caliber. Nodes of Yesod has it all! Great graphics, superb sound(at least for Speccy) and beautiful animations! There are numerous details awaiting to amaze you, from spaceship that is orbiting around the moon to the twinkling stars in the distant space. Simply too much to mention all here. You just have to see for yourself!

And the story? Well it goes something like this... Charlemagne "Charlie" Fotheringham-Grunes, apprentice saviour of the universe has been asked to find the source of mysterious signals from the moon - a large black Monolith. And he wouldn't be much of a hero if he wouldn't accepted the mission, would he? The task of getting to the Monolith can only be achieved by finding the 8 strange items, called the "alchiems". These are the items looking somewhat like a strange crystal thingies... There are four different types of alchiems in the game, each of a different colour and shape. The red one is square, the blue is shaped like a triangle, magenta is round and the green alchiem is shaped like a diamond. You have to collect alchiems of the same type to finish the game. But before you start collecting them, you must first find the master alchiem which is drawn in one color only (ordinary alchiems are drawn in white with the colored star thingie in the upper right corner!). This master alchiem is telling you which type of alchiems you are required to collect!

Your journey starts on the surface of the moon. You can see the Earth in distance and the rocket is orbiting around and waiting for you to complete your mission. But before you wander beneath the surface, try to catch one of the strange animals appearing from some craters. It is some kind of a mole-type being, able to chew through some of the walls beneath the surface of the moon, so it's well worth the effort!

When you got the mole in your backpack(or wherever Charlie puts the thingie), you can finally leap down one of the holes into the maze of the underground caverns.

While you are jumping around looking for alchiems, you will encounter numerous monsters(actually, a lot of them are quite nice looking). Most of them won't do you any harm and will only get in your way. You can chase and squash them with the mole. But a few of them (mostly found in lower caverns) are impossible to kill and if you touch them, you will lose a lot of energy and start bouncing all over the place. You also lose energy if you fall to deep, so try not to jump blindly from cavern to cavern.

You will also encounter some strange red astronauts that will steal one of your alchiems if you touch them! You can get rid of them with gravity stick, that renders them harmless and sends all other monsters to the bottom of the current cavern. But be carefull! You don't actually have the sticks at the beginning. You get them by picking up one of the extra life helmets that are scattered about the caverns.

The cavern system is huge! It consists of 256 caverns(or rooms if you want) of 3 different types(at least I saw 3 different "room decorations" by now). You can even find some kind of an underground pit that has an upward draft, so you get slowly towards the bottom without getting hurt at the end of the fall.

The realisation of the game is on the brink of perfection. Graphics are great and animation near perfect(just check the somersaults of Charlie when he is jumping around the caverns). Sound is very good... catchy tune at the beginning and quite a few sound fx's during the game. And for the addictive qualities... Well, you won't get bored until you solve the game, I can tell you that much... If you like Underwurlde type of games, then play this one! If not... play it anyway... you won't regret it!

by JohnnyBravo

🖌	**95%**
🎵	**86%**
🕹	**92%**
⏱	**93%**

92%

Turrican 2

My reputation for slightly strict scoring has caught up with me. Today I was talking to the editor and he was telling me that I had not rated any Commodore 64 game with scores that gave the game an average score of at least ninety percent. I simply told him that I would try and think of a decent game that I could review for the magazine, thus generating a Commodore 64 90%+ must-have game.

The problem however, lied not in the fact that I was scoring games too harshly, but for another reason. You see, I could think of a few games that I would happily give a score of at least ninety percent to- I won't tell you them here obviously, but judging by the fact that most magazine readers read the score of a game before the review text, you already know whether or not Turrican II is worthy of such a glorious score. The rest of you patient people who read review text want me to stop wasting time with the intro, read on...

Turrican II is a platformer/shooter hybrid, or "platform blaster" as I like to call them (don't ask why) where you must blow up everything that moves as you wander through five beautifully-designed and absolutely huge worlds that are quite simply breathtaking. It does not share the pace of a mindless blaster such as Smash TV (or a blaster where you have to think- Iridis Alpha- for that matter), but instead scrolls along at a fair pace allowing you to take in each world in all of it's luscious glory.

Luscious glory? Definitely. Turrican II features some of the best graphics- both in terms of design and quality- that you will ever see. Bosses can be huge great big mechanical beasts that are as gorgeously detailed as they are deadly. Similarly, the graphics for the backgrounds are quite good, and when you eventually play through the entirety of level 3, your jaw will have dropped in awe and you wonder if it can ever get any better- not only in the game, but in terms of demonstrations of the Commodore 64's capabilities.

Although the pace of the game means that action is not overly frantic, explosive gameplay is still present: you can tell that Turrican II is an action-packed game when you are on the bus home after buying the game and are reading the tape inlay and the descriptions of the destructive weaponary on offer. The gyroscope from Turrican I- an indestructible rolling ball form that your character can adopt- returns, but it now has infintite uses (and it can also drop timed mines- very handy.) You have a standard gun which fires puny bullets, and you can hold down the fire button for "lightning"- effectively a super-fast fully-automatic version of your standard gun (indeed, the developers have designed the game so that enemies have plenty of energy so that the player can not win the game easily by consistently using lightning.) You have three smart bombs that do not wipe out the whole screen initially but can be charged up with power-ups, and you have the "superweapon"- a screen clearer (except for bosses, where it merely takes off a whole heap of energy) that is your biggest weapon. Understandably, this has hardly any ammo.

These weapons are only the tip of the iceberg though: what would you think if I told you that all of the above weaponry is available to you from the start? Exactly. However, this is only the beginning of the arsenal description: the game features pick ups that change your standard gun into a gun that fires powerful photon-style blasts, or three-way blasts, or big ricocheting bullets. And many of these power ups can be upgraded - pick up enough "three-way fire" power ups, and three-way may become five-way. Get the idea?

The enemy design needs to be mentioned as well: during the start of the game you can see big dragon-type beasts that can only be shot in the head, little enemies that can either be shot to death or jumped on, Super Mario-style, or enemies that have the following description...One of the ememies that kills me the most is a big black bomb that spirals towards the ground. On impact, it releases a scurrying little enemy that rushes as near to your character's feet as it can, draining your character of his energy. To avoid this, you must shoot the bomb as it descends (I recommend lightning), but even when you do that, its explosion releases little flying "shards" that, whilst not too damaging to your health, can still kill you if you are in a critical condition.

The genius evident within the design of everything is what makes the game brilliant, as you always have something to consider when tackling a specific enemy, or when going to make a leap to a far away platform. I haven't even mentioned the surprise that is present in the third level of the game: suffice to say, unless you have read reviews that insist on spoilersm you will not expect it at all.

So, back to the question that remains unanswered (unless you skipped to the end of the review): why was I reluctant to write a review of a game that I believe deserves ninety percent or more? The simple fact of the matter is this: Turrican II humbles me - it is absolutely magnificently huge, and each screen of the game is packed with imagination, beauty and, above all, solid gameplay. It may not be as innovative as some may wish, but it delivers one of the best examples of the platform blaster that you are ever likely to see. The reason for my reluctance was that I was afraid that I might miss out fine details that contribute to make the game magnificent. I hope that my review does the game justice.

Qazi

🖌	**96%**
🎵	**92%**
🕹	**95%**
⏱	**95%**

94%

Kenny Dalglish Soccer Manager

Kenny Dalglish would be just another soccer management game if it wasn't for a few interesting and different bits of gaming design in it. At the start of the game, you must choose the controls you'll be using and the team you'll manage. Teams are standard for 1990 management game and I usually pick Halifax(don't ask me why...). Right after that, you are transported to the screen with lots of icons. Click the top left one(desk and chairs) if you need to communicate with physio, chairman, bank manager, scout, coach or an accountant. Once per week, you can look for potential additions to your squad by paying a visit to the scout. The icon with players is taking you to the squad management screen. Here you can select your first eleven, sell some of the players, check your next opponent and go to the next match. The icon on the top right(the one with the camera) is used to manipulate two options(highlights and detail reports). You can load or save the game with bottom two icons. When you press the "goto next match" icon, the game will ask if you want to rearrange your formation. If you click yes, you will have to place each of your players on the field. When you are done, the match starts. If you selected the highlights option, the game will show you the play if there is a scoring chance. And I can tell you, the game would be boring without the highlights! Just imagine, half final of the FA cup, the score is 1:1 and in the 90th minute the game jumps into the highlight screen with your opponent on the offensive! You'll have to experience this to believe me, but it makes your heart go really fast! And the highlights are presented really nice with big and nicely drawn players on the field trying to score, or to defend their goal.

At the beginning of each season, your chairman gives you the goals. Usually something like "I wanna see us promoted" or "Don't get relegated". And you better do what he says, or you're history.

So, should I recommend it? Well, actually yes, if you like management games, then you must try this one! Graphics are nicely done with nice icons, backgrounds and very good graphics during the highlights. Only the animation of the players could be done better. Sound effects and music are practically non existant so I didn't rate them at all. The game is totally addictive and if you are into this genre, you'll play it for a long time.

6JohnnyBravo

🖌	**79%**
🎵	**/**
🕹	**84%**
⏱	**90%**

Halifax attacking

84%

Cool Croc Twins

In my opinion, there weren't enough decent and innovative puzzle games for the C64 (indeed, I tried Pipemania only a couple of days ago - it was quite fun, but that's a story for another time) whilst it was still alive. This is probably due to the fact that puzzle games are some of the hardest games to make; not in terms of technical excellence, but in terms of imagination. Kudos to the coder who can develop something fresh and original and have it loved by the people.

Still, if you can't do a genre well, why not try adding elements from other genres? That seems to be the case for the puzzle/platformer hybrid Cool Croc Twins. Whilst the game is in danger of scaring off buyers who would feel safer with something they can relate to and understand (one of the downsides that I'll come back to), it is quite fun and can be enjoyed by anyone.

So, as it's a puzzle game I'm going to have to go through the trouble of explaining what it is the player or players (yes, players) have to do. There is some plot behind the game I think; it revolves around Daisy, the object of the twins' affections. So it's probably something like a rescue mission where you have to turn on lights so as to see where she is, or a thing where, by completing the puzzles, you impress Daisy and go out for a pizza. Who knows. It's not really relevant. All that you really need to know is that you're in for plenty of levels of varied and interesting gaming.

Each of the levels of Cool Croc Twins is a single-screen affair- not unlike most puzzlers (well, apart from Lemmings)- with no scrolling. On this screen we see that your character is in a box, standing on the floor. Dotted around inside the box are various platforms and, more importantly, boxes with lights in them. "Lights? They don't look like lights to me." Ah, that's because none of them have been turned on. And here comes the object of the game. by jumping and colliding into one of these boxes, one of the three lights within that box will illuminate. Your task is to illuminate every light within every box by colliding into each one three times. However, there are enemies on each level who are determined to put out the lights (in the same way that you switch them on) to make your task harder. Alternatively, they could walk into your character whilst he is not in mid-jump, costing you a life.

There's more. You're probably wondering why I said that your character was "standing on the floor." Well that's a given: where else would he stand? How about the wall? Or the ceiling? Or on the underside of a platform? Or the side of a platform? Cool Croc Twins lets you walk on practically any surface you jump on, meaning you can jump off the floor (note: there is no gravity in CCT so when you jump you don't stop) and collide with a platform and stick to the underside, before walking round and to the surface of the platform. These handy techniques allow the game to throw cunning puzzles at you: you could stand on the floor and repeatedly headbutt a set of lights that are below a ceiling, but wouldn't it be better to run on the underside of the ceiling and headbutt them the quick way?

I first played this game about eleven years ago in 1992, but only now do I realise how innovative it was (and indeed still is.) Further levels introduce different blocks- some are frail stone blocks that have to be headbutted and broken before you can reach the block of lights behind it, others change your direction mid flight, others spin you around for a while before leaving you to continue flying through the air. I'll leave you to discover the rest.

The graphics are good, with nice cartoon backdrops, the music's really good and funky, the gameplay is exceptional, and the two-player mode will have you coming back for more. The only nag I have is that the sprites look a bit messy. Oh, and it can get a bit boring for the solo player. Stil, a very nice game.

Qazi

70%	
75%	
78%	
62%	

71%

That's all folks!

Thanks for reading our little e-zine. Hope to see you again in the next issue!

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